



# U.S. Jets Across



*Sixteen F.80As  
from Selfridge  
Field Land at  
Odiham*

*Old Glory flew alongside the R.A.F. ensign when the Shooting Stars arrived at Odiham. (Below) Air Marshal Sir James Robb greets Lt.-Col. David Schilling.*

ON Wednesday of last week, a formation of 16 Lockheed Shooting Stars of No. 56 Fighter Group U.S.A.F. completed the first West-East crossing of the Atlantic by jet aircraft by landing at the home station of No. 54 Squadron R.A.F., who had previously made the first East-West jet crossing in Vampires.

A very high and gusty wind was blowing when they arrived and, having been let down through the clouds some ninety miles from the station, the bumpy conditions made their formation of flights astern rather ragged. However, this was soon ironed out as they turned and flew back over the airfield in line ahead. The flights then landed in turn—the orbiting flights passing over the airfield in perfect formation while the others were using the runway. Their landing drill is to follow the leading aircraft down at intervals of about 15 seconds. This gives about 2,000ft horizontal distance whilst in the air and about half that space interval on touching down.

Lt.-Col. David Schilling, who commanded the F.80As, landed first and was met by the Station Commander, W/C.



E. T. Smith, and welcomed by Air Marshal Sir James Robb, Vice Chief of Air Staff. Later Air Marshal Sir William Elliot, A.O.C.-in-C. Fighter Command, A.V.-M. Vincent, A.O.C. No. 11 Group, and A.V.-M. McGregor, A.O.A. Fighter Command, chatted with all the pilots.

The route followed was the same as that taken by the R.A.F. Vampires and the journey from Selfridge Field, Michigan, to Odiham airfield, Hampshire, totalled up to 4,288 statute miles. This was completed in 10 hours 40 minutes flying time. Leaving Selfridge Field on July 12th the formation made Goose Bay, Labrador, the same day after an intermediate stop at Bangor, Maine. Bad weather held them up at Goose Bay, and during this stay one of the engines was changed because of excessive oil consumption. This operation was completed in 4 hours. The Shooting Stars were at Goose Bay when the Vampires landed there but were able to take off for Bluie West, Greenland, on July 17th. The next leg to Iceland was completed on July 19th and the formation moved on to Stornoway the following day. The final section from Stornoway to Odiham was completed on July 21st, their flying time for the 580 miles being 1 hour 40 minutes. The only aids to navigation were radio compasses and V.H.F.

Nearly the whole journey was flown over cloud and at an average height of about 32,000ft. The Lockheed F.80As are all, of course, fitted with pressurized cockpits. The long-range drop tanks carried under the wing tips hold 137.5 Imperial gallons of fuel each, and are marked as being suitable for aromatic fuels. With tanks situated as they are at the extreme tips of the wings, a degree of care has to be taken during rough weather to avoid damage to the wing structure, and if conditions become too bumpy the tanks have to be jettisoned.

*Air Marshal Sir William Elliot and A.V.-M. Vincent chatting with the American pilots.*

On Sunday the Shooting Stars left for Furstenfeldbruck.